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MEMORANDUM

Special Assessments on the Middle East Situation

KING HUSAYN'S CURRENT POSITION

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
27 June 1967

King Husayn's Current Position

1. King Husayn's position inside Jordan and the Arab world has improved significantly since the end of the hostilities of 5-9 June. His initiative in coming to the UN and speaking out for the Arab side has increased his standing in Jordan and the Arab world. His traditional opponents in Damascus and Cairo are weakened. Each day that there is little or no trouble in the form of popular demonstrations in Jordan, the odds for short-term survival increase in Husayn's favor. While Husayn has historically shown great political resilience, he nevertheless faces and will continue to face critical political and economic problems.

2. Now that the area cease-fire is complete the most immediate and serious threat to King Husayn's viability is the problem of regaining the Jordanian territory seized by Israel. The flow of Palestinians from the West Bank to the East Bank is daily assuming critical proportions in terms of psychological, political, and economic impact in Jordan's capital of Amman. Unless this flow is quickly terminated and some of the Palestinians are returned to their homes on the West Bank, they could eventually place unmanageable stress on the Hashemite regime.

3. Husayn is limited in the extent to which he can make concessions to Israel. If the Israelis incorporate Jerusalem into Israel rather than returning it to Jordan or agreeing to a guaranteed international status for that city, Husayn will come to be blamed for its loss. He would be less vulnerable, of course, if the UAR and Syria lost territory to Israel also. If Jerusalem is internationalized in some fashion and Jordan regains most of the West Bank, Husayn will have basically resolved his territorial and Palestinian problems and thus eliminated one of the two current threats to his throne.

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4. The second threat to Husayn derives from the problem of rearming the Jordanian Armed Forces in a manner and with significant speed to quell the high pitch of dissatisfaction among Jordan's military officers. There is little doubt that the officers will blame their loss to Israel principally on two factors: lack of sufficient air capability and a lack of ground forces mobile enough to face the highly mechanized Israeli forces. Unless Husayn moves rapidly and successfully to re-equip his forces, his key officers will put pressure on him to obtain military equipment from the Soviet Union. If he refused, especially after failing to correct deficiencies through US military assistance, antiregime plotting in the army would certainly increase and probably would become a grave threat to Husayn's leadership of Jordan.

5. Because Jordan was in the forefront of the recent fighting and thereby suffered the most of all Arab states, Husayn's temporary status among Arab leaders is exceptionally favorable. It will probably be only a short time, however, before the UAR and Syrian regimes will put pressure on Husayn to be more neutral vis-a-vis the West or else once again face the propaganda and political hostilities of the "progressive Arab states."

6. In summary, while Husayn is a moderate Arab compared to the Arab socialist leaders in the UAR and Syria, anti-West feeling in Jordan has increased considerably and he will not be able to appear as openly pro-West and American as he has in the past without risking the life of his regime.

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